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2/7/02Attorney's Docket No. 33339/206076**PATENT****IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

In re: Laurent Benbadis et al.

Group Art Unit: 1651

Appl. No.: 09/700,687

Examiner: R. Davis

Filed: February 14, 2001

For: MUTANT LACTOBACILLUS
BULGARICUS STRAINS FREE FROM
BETA-GALACTOSIDE ACTIVITY

October 15, 2001

Commissioner for Patents
Washington, DC 20231**AMENDMENT**

Sir:

In response to the Office Action mailed July 16, 2001, please amend the above-identified application as follows:

In The Claims:

- B1
1. (Amended) A mutant strain of *L. bulgaricus* lacking β -galactosidase activity which carries a non-sense mutation in at least one of the coding sequences of the lactose operon.
 2. (Amended) The mutant strain of *L. bulgaricus* as claimed in claim 1, wherein said coding sequence is the sequence encoding β -galactosidase.

B2

 3. (Twice Amended) The mutant strain of *L. bulgaricus* as claimed in claim 1, which was deposited on January 14, 1998 with the CNCM under the number I-1968.
 4. (Amended) A lactic ferment, which comprises at least one strain of *L. bulgaricus* as claimed in claim 1.
 5. (Amended) The lactic ferment as claimed in claim 4, wherein said strain of *L. bulgaricus* is combined with at least one strain of *S. thermophilus*.